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DAVID MAASS' CANVASBACKS 'IN FLIGHT WIN 1982-83 "DUCK STAMP" COMPETITION

David A. Maass, a prominent Minnesota waterfowl artist, won the 1982-83 Federal "Duck Stamp" competition in Washington, D.C., on November 5 with his oil painting of three canvasback ducks flying over water.

This becomes the second win in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's annual contest for Maass. In 1973, he took first place for his oil painting of wood ducks in flight, and his design was reproduced on the following year's Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, popularly known as the "Duck Stamp."

This year, Maass' design topped a record 2,099 entries in judging ceremonies at the Department of the Interior. The "Duck Stamp" contest is the Federal Government's only regularly sponsored art competition.

The winning entry will appear on next year's stamp, which must be purchased by all waterfowl hunters 16 years of age and older in the United States. Revenue from the sale of the "Duck Stamp" is used to buy wetlands and other types of waterfowl habitat under a program administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Many stamps are also bought by non-hunters with a similar interest in preservation of waterfowl habitat, as well as by a growing number of stamp collectors.

Interior Secretary James Watt, who attended this year's judging, called the "Duck Stamp" program "....very successful. I take a great deal of pride in supporting the acquisition of wetlands and other vital waterfowl habitat because of their value to the country's migratory birds. And the 'Duck Stamp' funds that insure their preservation are provided by the very conservationists who use and enjoy this resource."

Maass, 51, is a professional wildlife artist who has devoted himself to painting full-time for the past 20 years. His efforts have earned him numerous second-place finishes in earlier Federal competitions, in addition to his one previous win. Maass is a largely self-taught artist, however, with only three lessons from a correspondence course while in high school that qualify as formal art training.

"I had a good high school art teacher, however, and I worked with some other wildlife painters until I gradually developed my own style," Maass says, adding, "I started into wildlife art in my spare time during the Korean War, when I served 2 years in the photographic division of the Marines." Maass produced the final designs for the 1977 and 1979 Minnesota State "Duck Stamps." He was honored as artist-of-the-year by Ducks Unlimited, Inc., in 1974, and was selected by the Minnesota Wildlife Heritage Foundation for its first such award in 1980.

"You bet it's a thrill, as big as it was the first time around," Maass said when reached by telephone at his home in Waterville, Minnesota, and told of his first-place win. Maass lives and hunts in a section of the State dotted with shallow lakes that is well-known both for its waterfowl and its waterfowl artists.

His design, an oil painting on illustration board, depicts a pair of canvasbacks in flight followed by a second drake (male). They are set against a stormy sky over

(over)

rough water. "It's a typical duck hunter's atmosphere -- a windy, gray day. Not the typical blue skies that are my usual designs," Maass said. "That's my idea of a perfect duck scene -- canvasbacks over water with a stormy background."

The canvasback is a large species of duck, averaging 22 inches in length and up to 3 pounds in weight. The drake has a distinctive reddish-brown head and a growl-like call; the hen lacks much of the male's color and has a mallard-like quack. The canvasback has a rapid and noisy wingbeat and is the fastest-flying of the larger duck species.

Minnesota artists were prominent in this year's final judging. Terry Redlin of Hastings, Minnesota, was the second highest finisher with a painting of snow geese, and Phil Scholer of Kasson, Minnesota, finished third with a depiction of redhead ducks.

Judges for this year's contest were Richard E. McCabe, publications director of the Wildlife Management Institute in Washington, D.C.; Tom Opre, chairman-of-the-board of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, Inc., and editor-at-large of Outdoor Life Magazine, of Brighton, Michigan; Edward L. Kozicky, director of conservation for the Winchester Group of the Olin Corporation, of East Alton, Illinois; Herbert Doig, assistant commissioner for natural resources of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, of Albany, New York; and Howard W. Pollock, first vice president of the National Rifle Association of America and former U.S. Representative from Alaska, of Washington, D.C. Leonard Buckley of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing served as the technical adviser to the judges.

Before 1949, wildlife artists were commissioned to produce a design for the annual stamp. Since then, the design has been chosen through a contest open to all artists who are residents or citizens of the U.S. Contestants are limited to one entry apiece.

This year's record 2,099 entries are an increase of more than 500 over last year's contest. The growing popularity of the "Duck Stamp" contest has prompted designs from a wide range of artists, although entries from many of the Nation's top professional waterfowl artists make the final judging extremely competitive. Judges adhere to five major criteria in picking the winner, all of which are assigned equal weight (immediate visual impact, composition and design, style, lasting first impression, and distinctiveness). The Bureau of Engraving and Printing also advises judges on the suitability of entries for reproduction as stamp designs.

The Federal Government offers no prize to the winner other than a sheet of the following year's "Duck Stamps," but commercial wildlife art dealers in the past have been eager to market limited edition reprints of the design under private agreements with the winners. Through this contest, the reputations of previously unknown wildlife artists have been established, and those of professionals have been enhanced.

The colorful stamps are the longest running, annually issued series of stamps in U.S. revenue stamp history. Since 1934, when "Duck Stamps" first went on sale, over 2.5 million acres of prime waterfowl habitat have been acquired with over \$370 million in revenue (\$226 million from "Duck Stamp" receipts and \$144 million from accelerated wetlands acquisition loan funds). By buying the stamps, more than 2.2 million conservationists, most of them hunters and other sportsmen, provide over \$16.5 million in support for this program each year.

The Interior Department encourages non-hunters who also enjoy wildlife through photography, birdwatching, and other activities to contribute to the Nation's conservation effort by buying a "Duck Stamp." For the second year in a row, National Wildlife Refuges are now selling the stamps at a number of visitors' centers and field stations. Next year's \$7.50 issue will go on sale at post offices on July 1, 1982.

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